

**SAN FRANCISCO VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
PSYCHOLOGY POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
IN ADDICTION RESEARCH**



**VA
HEALTH
CARE**

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UCSF
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San Francisco

The San Francisco VA Medical Center offers two-year psychology postdoctoral advanced research fellowships in addiction research. This fellowship program is associated with the Sierra Pacific MIRECC (VISN 21), affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and funded by the Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

For the 2022-2024 training cycle, we are recruiting for one position. Psychologists and physicians (psychiatrist or other board-certified/board eligible physician) are eligible. The primary goal of this fellowship program is to train psychologists, other allied health professionals, and MDs to become leading clinical researchers in high priority areas of mental health and addiction research. Over the course of the two-year program, fellows are trained in academic and health systems research, advanced clinical care service delivery, and program administration in an interdisciplinary setting. The fellowship combines individual mentored research and clinical training with state-of-the-art educational experiences.

One highly successful aspect of training has been the video conference seminar series. Twice a month, a leading expert in the field presents to fellows at all MIRECC sites through the video conferencing system. The didactics emphasize two main areas. One includes presentations on all aspects of career development from grant and manuscript preparation to the role of mentorship. The second emphasis is on the most recent advances in conducting specific components of clinical research in mental health, from genetics to designing the best interventions. There is also a strong emphasis on state-of-the-art methodological approaches to mental health research and practice. Seminar topics last year included VA career development, funding and resources,

behavioral genetics, health informatics, and designing clinical trials of behavioral therapies. Ongoing multi-site workshops on manuscript and grant preparation are also provided to the fellows in addition to ongoing weekly biostatistical consultation through the coordinating center.

Fellows devote 75% time to research and educational activities and 25% to clinical, educational, and administrative activities. In collaboration with their mentors, fellows will develop and implement a research project, publish and present findings, participate in grant writing, and utilize the latest technology for educational activities and clinical service delivery.

Our faculty have extensive and varied research interests, including:

- Process analysis of motivational interviewing and other in-session processes. Dr. Borsari and Manuel have been examining the fidelity of motivational interventions and how in-session therapist and client behaviors are linked to subsequent behavior change (Drs. Borsari, Manuel).
- Marijuana use in veteran populations (Drs. Zaman, Borsari). Specifically, the fellow would have the opportunity to collaborate on analyzing longitudinal data from a recently completed study with OIF/OEF/OND veterans (Co-PI Borsari).
- Ongoing research on pharmacologic treatment of substance use disorders with particular focus on AUD. Drs. Batki and Pennington are conducting human lab and clinical trials testing a number of pharmacologic treatments for alcohol and other substance use disorders with an emphasis on the treatment of patients with co-occurring mild traumatic brain injury and posttraumatic stress disorder. (Drs. Batki, Pennington).
- Development, implementation, and evaluation of cognitive neuroscience-informed technology-based interventions (virtual reality working memory retraining, virtual reality mindfulness training, alcohol approach bias modification, and digital health technologies) to remediate cognitive dysfunction associated with alcohol, tobacco and opioid use disorders (Pennington, Herbst, Batki).
- Development and evaluation of web- and smartphone-based mobile Health (mHealth) interventions for veterans and other populations addressing a variety of addictive behaviors (Drs. Borsari, Herbst, Manuel). Includes iterative development of novel technology products using human-centered design techniques and mixed methods. Qualitative data coding and analytic techniques using ATLAS.ti are incorporated into digital health product design.
- Ongoing research involving focused neurocognitive assessment, multimodal neuroimaging (functional MRI, structural MRI, proton magnetic resonance spectroscopy, and diffusion tensor imaging), and electroencephalography (EEG) to investigate the neurobiological substrates of various pharmaco- and behavioral therapies for alcohol use disorders and common comorbidities. (Drs. Pennington, Batki)
- Development, implementation, and evaluation of brief interventions for addictive behaviors, particularly those that incorporate motivational interviewing and personalized feedback (Drs. Borsari, Manuel, Herbst).

Responsibilities for the position include but are not limited to: (1) recruitment of research participants, primarily treatment seeking substance users, as well as tracking/locating participants for follow-up assessments throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, (2) administering study batteries to participants at off site locations, (3) data management and analysis, (4) preparation of study materials (e.g., assessments, correspondence with Institutional Review Board). Training in fMRI data

acquisition and analysis is also available. Experience/skills in data management, consenting and running research participants, working with individuals from diverse backgrounds, communicating effectively both orally and in writing, and working in a team setting is preferred.

Clinical training will focus on assessment and treatment of Veterans with substance use disorders in our clinics at the SFVA. Research training will include hands-on conduct of experiments, cognitive assessment, neuroimaging acquisition and analysis, brief motivational-based intervention, duties will also include manuscript preparation, and oversight of research coordinator activities. Fellow will participate actively in ongoing research and grant submissions, will participate in pilot projects, will have opportunities for first-author publications and presentation of findings at conferences using new and existing datasets, and will have an opportunity to prepare independent research grants.

For more information about this fellowship program please contact Dr. Brian Borsari
(Brian.Borsari@va.gov)

CORE FACULTY:

Brian Borsari, PhD (Fellowship Director)
Steven Batki, MD
David Pennington, PhD
Ellen Herbst, MD
Jennifer Manuel, PhD
Tessa Rife, PharmD, BCGP, CACP
Christopher Galloway, PhD
Samuel Wan, PhD
Tauheed Zaman, MD
Michael Hoefler, MD

Medical Center Community

The San Francisco VA Medical Center, or "Fort Miley," as it is known to native San Franciscans, is a nationally known teaching hospital in one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. Located on a hill seven miles from downtown San Francisco, the hospital overlooks the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Golden Gate Bridge to the north. The grounds cover approximately 30 acres and include 23 buildings. Each year San Francisco VA Medical Center provides Services to more than 400,000 veterans living in an eight-county area of Northern California. The Medical Center provides diagnostic and treatment services in a number of specialty areas including neurological diseases, cardiology, oncology, renal dialysis, and open heart surgery in addition to mental health treatment.

The San Francisco VA Medical Center is affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), one of the top ranked medical schools in the country, and we train 1500 of their students in 60 professional and allied health academic programs yearly. In addition to its broader commitment to the veteran population and education, SFVAMC has the largest funded research program in the Veterans Health Administration with more than \$87 million in annual research expenditures. Our Medical Center is the top-ranked VA Medical Center in terms of research grants. There are over 220 active research projects currently being conducted. Areas of particular interest are: stress and health, PTSD, substance use disorders, neuroscience disease,

aging, interprofessional training, oncology, hypertension, stroke, cardiovascular disease, Hepatitis C, health services research and advanced medical imaging

SFVAMC also has the largest non-profit research foundation in VA, the Northern California Institute for Research and Education (NCIRE; also known as The Veterans Health Research Institute) which administers \$54 million dollars from which indirect costs serve to enhance the VA research enterprise. The Medical Center has four Medical Science Research Enhancement Award Programs (REAP) in neurology research, prostate cancer, bone research, and rehabilitation research and one HSR&D REAP in aging research. It is one of the few medical centers in the world equipped for studies using both whole-body magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and spectroscopy, and is the site of VA's National Center for the Imaging of Neurological Diseases. (For a directory of SFVA researchers please see: <https://www.ncire.org/>).

The Medical Center is fully accredited by the Joint Commission for its general medical and surgical programs as well as its psychiatry and addictive disorder programs. It is approved by the American Medical Association for the training of medical students and residents in all of the major specialties and subspecialties, the Council of Teaching Hospitals of the Association of American Medical Colleges, and the West Bay Hospital Conference.

Patient Population

The San Francisco VA Medical Center serves a predominantly male population ranging in age from 18 to 90+ years, although the number of women accessing services is increasing. All racial/ethnic groups are represented and there is a large LGBT community. Patients span the spectrum of socioeconomic classes but most are considered “working class.”

Veterans do not have to have served in a war to receive benefits; however, the largest cohorts are the World War II / Korean Conflict veterans, most of whom are 65 to 90 years old, and the Vietnam Era veterans who are now in their fifties. Veterans from the Persian Gulf War (Desert Storm, Desert Shield) and the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom [OEF], Operation Iraqi Freedom [OIF] also receive health care in the VA system. Of late, particular attention has been paid to program development and special services in order to meet the needs of our returning soldiers.

Psychology Setting at SFVAMC

Psychological services and psychology clinical and research training at San Francisco VA Medical Center are embedded into the Mental Health Service. The Mental Health Service teams have an interdisciplinary structure with the following disciplines represented: psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing, internal medicine, addictions specialists, peer specialists, occupational therapy, and recreational therapy.

Psychologists hold key positions in many of our specialized treatment clinics such as General Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic, PTSD Clinical Team, Addiction Recovery Treatment Services, Neuropsychological and Psychological Assessment Program, Health Psychology, Integrated Mental Health and Primary Care, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Women's Clinic, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Geropsychology, Home-based Primary Care, Suicide Prevention Team and our outlying Community-Based Outpatient Clinics in Santa Rosa and Eureka, CA.

Most supervising psychologists have clinical faculty appointments in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco Medical School. The San Francisco VA has the commitment of Medical Center administration to funding trainees and young faculty members and increasing the next generation of basic and clinical scientists and VA faculty members. The clinical, teaching, and scholarly achievements of our faculty are extensive.

General Breadth of Training

Education of current and future health care providers is one of the five missions of the San Francisco VA Medical Center. Over 650 fellows, residents, interns and students from a wide array of disciplines train here yearly. Unit based in-services are offered regularly. Since the Mental Health Service is affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, UCSF Medical School, our staff and trainees have access to their library, colloquia, and seminars including weekly Psychiatry Grand Rounds.

The national training mission of VA is broad and explicitly includes training of health care professionals for the nation, as well as for the VA system. We train fellows who go on to VA careers, and we train others who go on to work in research, academia, other medical centers, and the private sector. A number of our own postdoctoral fellows have recently gone on to obtain positions in VA careers, both here and at other facilities.

Psychology Research Fellowship Program Structure

The psychology research fellows train in the clinic(s) or programs associated with their research fellowships. They receive supervision from the psychologists, medical educators, and other clinical investigators leading those research studies and clinics. The research fellows are primarily involved in research activities (~75% time) and can allot up to 25 percent of their time to educational, clinical, and administrative activities. As fellows move from Year 1 to Year 2, they progress from projects designed by their mentor to a more independently conceived project, which they lead. There are additional opportunities for training in clinical supervision, leadership, and program development. The fellows also participate in didactic training designed to facilitate research design and implementation skills, including seminars, grand rounds, and journal clubs.

Psychology Research Fellowship Goals:

At the end of Psychology Advanced Research Fellowships, we expect fellows to have acquired the following competencies and completed the following tasks:

- gained knowledge of their designated content area of scientific inquiry
- advanced their knowledge of statistical and methodological techniques needed for research in their area of interest
- understand empirical research projects in their area of interest
- conducted at least two research projects: One designed by their preceptor; and one of their own design, for which they have primary responsibility
- made multiple internal presentations
- made at least two presentations of their work at national meetings
- published one to three journal articles

- submitted a small grant application to local funding sources
- published additional publications from the work completed as a scholar during the two years following enrollment in our program

Facility and Training Resources

Fellows will have their own workspace with lockable cabinets, drawers, their own computer and telephone line with private extension number. Fellows have access to program support, medical library at the VA as well as use of UCSF library and other resources. Clinical space is provided through a room check-out procedure if necessary. Each VA computer has access to the Internet and on-line literature search resources as well as word processing and CPRS medical record keeping. There is a broad range of psychological and neuropsychological tests available. Clerical support is available through each clinic as well as through Psychological Services. The SFVAMC Medical Library has over 350 current journal subscriptions, 43 of which are mental health related. Medline and Psych Info searches are provided through the library, as are numerous other resources. Fellows also have access to the medical library of UCSF, with its 2,600 current journals and Center for Knowledge Management services.

Fellows will also have access to UCSF resources for junior investigators, including grant writing and statistical workshops for junior researchers, and consultative resources on grant preparation through the UCSF Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI, <https://ctsi.ucsf.edu/>).

Supervision and State Licensure

Fellows receive supervision from supervisors/mentors in their area of interest. Some research fellows may wish to pursue state licensure. Requirements for state licensure differ from state to state. Ways of achieving eligibility for licensure for fellows wishing to pursue this option are planned and arranged with the primary supervisor/mentor for those fellowships. Licensure in the state of California requires at least four hours of regularly scheduled supervision per week with a minimum of two supervisors, at least two of which are individual supervision. Supervision and evaluation methods include self-report of clinical work, supervision sessions, live observation of client; review and co-signature of all written material such as progress notes or other additions to the computerized patient record system; observation of case formulation and case presentation in staff meetings, treatment planning conferences, and other multidisciplinary settings; review of process notes, audiotape recording and/or videotape recording of psychotherapy and assessment sessions; and the review of psychological testing protocols and reports. Fellows should expect to be assigned readings and literature reviews as part of their supervision.

Evaluations

Fellows are formally evaluated at regular intervals to guide and determine progress in achieving fellowship goals and competencies. Evaluations are discussed with fellows and may be modified by mutual agreement before being placed in the training files. Fellows also are asked to evaluate their supervisors at each evaluation period, and an exit interview is completed at the end of fellowship to solicit feedback and suggestions for the program going forward.

Selection Process

Completed applications are reviewed by the supervisors of each research fellowship.

Application ratings are based on the applicant's interest, experience and quality of previous clinical training in the area of emphasis, academic work and accomplishments, letters of recommendation, personal qualities of the applicant (maturity, ethics, responsibility, insight, etc.) and written material. Ultimately, our selection criteria are based on a "goodness-of-fit" and we look for fellows whose experience and career goals match the research training that we offer.

Training Term

The research fellowships are full-time, two-year, 52-week commitments (2080 hours per year). Research fellows are entitled to 10 federal holidays and earn sick leave and vacation (annual leave) days at a rate of 4 hours of each per two-week pay period (a total of 13 days of each). San Francisco VA also offers generous professional leave for conferences and other approved educational activities. Some fellowships can extend to a third year. Requirements for state licensure as a professional psychologist can be met within some of our research fellowships.

Stipend and Benefits

The current stipend is \$ for the first year. State and federal income tax and FICA are withheld from Fellows' checks. Fellows are not covered by Civil Service retirement or leave and are not eligible for federal life insurance benefits. The United States Government covers fellows for malpractice under the Federal Tort Claims Act. VA offers individual and family health insurance plans for fellows on a matching basis, (i.e., fellows pay half of the premium and the VA pays the other half.) On June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional. As a result of this decision, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has now extended benefits to employees and annuitants who have legally married a spouse of the same sex. Dental and vision insurance are also available. San Francisco VA Medical Center also offers a public transportation reimbursement program. Fellows are entitled to 10 federal holidays and earn sick leave and vacation (annual leave) days at a rate of 4 hours of each per two-week pay period (a total of 13 days of each). San Francisco VA also offers professional leave for conferences and other approved educational activities.

Application & Selection Procedures

Eligibility

Candidates **MUST** be graduates of APA-accredited doctoral programs in clinical or counseling psychology and **MUST** have completed an APA-accredited internship. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed prior to the start of the fellowship year. Persons with a Ph.D. in another area of psychology who meet the APA criteria for respecialization training in Clinical or Counseling Psychology are also eligible. The VA requires that applicants are US Citizens, men have registered for selective service, and all have had varicella infection ("chicken pox") or vaccination for such prior to the start of the fellowship.

Specific details related to eligibility:

1. U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All interns and fellows must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training.

2. Fellows are subject to fingerprinting and background checks. Match result and selection decisions are contingent on passing these screens.
3. VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel as well as new employees. Interns and Fellows are not required to be tested prior to beginning work, but once on staff they are subject to random selection for testing as are other employees.
4. Have received a Doctorate from an APA-accredited graduate program in Clinical or Counseling Psychology. Persons with a doctorate in another area of psychology who meet the APA criteria for respecialization training in Clinical or Counseling Psychology are also eligible.
5. Have completed an internship program accredited by the APA Commission on Accreditation or have completed a VA- sponsored internship.

Application Procedure

To apply for one of these postdoctoral research fellowships, please submit the below application materials. Applicants are to submit their materials by email to Dr. Brian Borsari. The application deadline is **December 15, 2021, but applications submitted after that date may be considered until the position is filled.** Please do not mail any materials in hard copy form.

1. Letter of interest, including a brief summary of educational, research, and clinical research experiences relevant to the fellowship, a summary of your training needs and goals, and a statement of your career goals.
2. Current Curriculum Vitae
3. Three letters of Recommendation
4. A letter of support from your Dissertation chairperson describing your dissertation status and timeline if you have not completed your graduate degree. Dissertations must be complete before the postdoctoral fellowship begins. Please note we will be monitoring dissertation progress and status on a routine basis. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed prior to the start of the fellowship year.
5. A letter of support from your current Internship Training Director indicating that you are in good standing to successfully complete your predoctoral internship, including the expected completion date. If internship already completed, you can mail a copy of your predoctoral internship certificate.

Contact Information

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Other Information

The San Francisco VA's Psychology Research Fellowship Program is affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco.

In accord with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Program, fellows may be subject to urine testing for illicit drug use. Other branches of the federal government (Office of Personnel Management) may conduct routine background checks at their discretion.

The San Francisco VAMC is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply, including minorities and women. VA seeks candidates whose experience, teaching, research, or community service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to diversity and excellence.